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Action

Professional Services Committee

Proposed Revision of Common Standard 6: Advice and Assistance

Executive Summary: This agenda item presents a proposed revision to Common Standard 6: Advice and Assistance for the Commission's consideration and possible adoption.

Recommended Action: That the Commission adopt the proposed revision for Common Standard 6: Advice and Assistance.

Presenter: Cheryl Hickey, Administrator,
Professional Services Division

Strategic Plan Goal: 1

Promote educational excellence through the preparation and certification of professional educators

- ◆ Sustain high quality standards for the preparation and performance of professional educators and for the accreditation of credential programs

April 2011

Proposed Revision of Common Standard 6: Advice and Assistance

Introduction

The possibility of revising the language in Common Standard 6: Advice and Assistance to better meet the needs of the field was discussed at the March 2011 Commission meeting. Pursuant to the Commission's discussion at that meeting, staff brings this topic back for action.

Background

The Commission's Common Standards were last updated in 2008. The Common Standards include nine standards that all program sponsors must respond to in order to be approved to offer educator preparation programs. The Common Standards include the following:

- Standard 1: Educational Leadership
- Standard 2: Unit and Program Assessment and Evaluation
- Standard 3: Resources
- Standard 4: Faculty and Instructional Personnel
- Standard 5: Admission
- Standard 6: Advice and Assistance
- Standard 7: Field Experience and Clinical Practice
- Standard 8: District Employed Supervisors
- Standard 9: Assessment of Candidate Competence

The full text of the Common Standards may be found at <http://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/STDS-common.html>. In addition to the standards themselves, the COA developed definitions of key terms contained in the Common Standards and included the definitions in the Common Standards Glossary at the end of the Common Standards document.

Generally, issues that arise with respect to the specific wording of a given standard are addressed the next time that the standards in question are revised. This agenda item requests that the Commission revise Common Standard 6 at this time, rather than to wait until the next revision process for the entire package of Common Standards.

Standard 6: Advice and Assistance currently reads as follows:

Qualified members of the unit are assigned and available to advise applicants and candidates about their academic, professional and personal development, and to assist each candidate's professional placement. Appropriate information is accessible to guide each candidate's attainment of all program requirements. The institution and/or unit provide support and assistance to candidates and only retains candidates who are suited for entry or advancement in the education profession. Evidence regarding candidate progress and performance is consistently utilized to guide advisement and assistance efforts.

In recent months, stakeholders have indicated that there is confusion in the field, among both program sponsors and members of the Board of Institutional Reviewers (BIR), about the phrase in the first sentence that reads, “...and to assist each candidate’s professional placement.”

In discussions with stakeholders, COA members, and members of the BIR a variety of understandings of the term “professional placement” have been shared. Among them are the following:

- 1) The student teaching placement
- 2) The locations where field work takes place, including observing, tutoring, small group instruction, whole class instruction, clinical practice and student teaching
- 3) The employment a candidate would seek after completion of a preliminary preparation program

The COA Common Standards Glossary currently contains the following definition of professional placement:

A classroom, clinical or field experience that a candidate participates in during the preparation program. A school site is often a candidate’s assigned location for field experience.

This definition of professional placement, together with the use of the verb “assist,” has been taken to suggest that placement in field experiences or clinical practice is less than a central focus of the educator preparation program; that a program must merely “assist” with field experiences. Common Standard 7 related to Field Experience and Clinical Practice and related program standards more accurately and directly describe the responsibilities of the program sponsor with respect to providing field experiences and carefully selecting the site(s) for student teaching or clinical practice.

Veteran members of the COA, BIR and Dr. Birch, former Director of the Professional Services Division, suggest that the term “professional placement” in Common Standard 6 is meant to refer to the type of position or employment that the individual is currently preparing for and that he or she will be eligible for once he or she has earned the appropriate credential.

This difference of opinion about the intent and definition of the clause, “professional placement,” suggests that action is necessary to ensure that the standard is clearly understood by all institutions attempting to address the Common Standards as well as reviewers attempting to determine institutions’ alignment with the Common Standards.

At the March 2011 Commission meeting, staff presented two different options to the Commission: 1) revise the language of the standard, or 2) eliminate the clause at issue.

Several members of the Commission voiced support for the elimination of the clause “and to assist each candidate’s professional placement” entirely. Therefore, the Commission staff recommends that the Commission adopt a modification to Common Standard 6 such that it reads as follows:

Qualified members of the unit are assigned and available to advise applicants and candidates about their academic, professional and personal development. Appropriate information is accessible to guide each candidate's attainment of all program requirements. The institution and/or unit provide support and assistance to candidates and only retain candidates who are suited for entry or advancement in the education profession. Evidence regarding candidate progress and performance is consistently utilized to guide advisement and assistance efforts.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Commission adopt the revised language for Common Standard 6 as presented in the paragraph above.

Next Steps

If the Commission adopts the above language for Common Standard 6, staff will revise all appropriate documents including those on the Commission website to reflect the newly modified Common Standard 6.